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CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATIONS: THE ROLE OF INTERCULTURAL MEDIATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

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Abstract: The contemporary instructional context has been revealed as a fruitful space for the development of intercultural competences at the level of Global Citizenship Education, in which educators assume a crucial role as mediating agents, especially with regard to issues related to interpersonal communication and relationships, respect and acceptance of the Self and the culturally different Other, as well as awareness of the rights and duties of each human being in society. In this sense, this article presents some theoretical questions underlying the intercultural communicative process, as well as the role of mediation in managing meanings with interlocutors from other cultural backgrounds. This debate will be based on the legitimacy of reconstructing the meaning of human rights today, since there is an urgent need to rethink the true scope of their universal ownership, as well as the content of the human dignity that underpins them (NUSSBAUM, 2014). Next, we will present a critical analysis of the guiding documents of the intercultural perspective (CEFR 2001; CEFR, 2017), highlighting the new emphasis placed on intercultural mediation provided for in the latter in an intrinsic relationship with language learning. Finally, we advocate the importance of promoting research based on intercultural mediation aimed at teachers who wish to understand their role within a global citizenship perspective, in order to try to operationalize intercultural mediation actions, both inside and outside the school context, that foster interactions with intercultural communicative competence and the ability of learners to become citizens of cultural mediation at local, national and global levels.

Keywords: Education; Intercultural Mediation; Global Citizenship.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary research has raised questions about intercultural education as one of the main goals of the 21st century (UNESCO, 2009). However, we note that the task of educating a learner to become an intercultural speaker involves linguistic and cultural complexity in multicultural situations.

It is worth mentioning that all language is a historical and cultural construction in constant transformation. As a social and dynamic principle, language is not limited to a systemic and structural view of the linguistic code: it is heterogeneous, ideological and opaque. Full of meanings given to it by our cultures and societies, language organizes and determines the possibilities of perceiving the world and establishes possible understandings (Paraná, 2006).

According to Bakhtin (1988) every utterance involves the presence of at least two voices: the self and the other. There is no individual discourse in the sense that all discourse is constructed in the process of interaction and as a function of another. And it is in the discursive space, created by the relationship between the I and the You, that subjects are socially constituted. It is in the discursive engagement with the other that we shape what we say and who we are. This is why the foreign language presents itself as a space to broaden contact with other ways of knowing, with other interpretative procedures for constructing reality.

As far as language learning is concerned, today's instability, made possible by the rapid intercommunication between different cultures, can have a very productive effect if we understand the positivity of confrontations between perspectives and perceive learning as a constant clash between different worldviews.

In this sense, Sequeira (2016, p.67) postulates that "*if various cultural groups in a given culture define themselves in relation*

to each other, not only interaction and communication skills are essential, but also negotiation and mediation skills, with each individual empathetically placing themselves in the position of the Other, thus reducing their view of their culture's superiority."

From this perspective, we maintain that the relationship between language and culture is intrinsically related to the development of learners' intercultural competence from the perspective of global citizenship, in which any knowledge about different cultures helps to broaden their repertoire, not only in terms of different worldviews, but also by preparing them to mediate meanings with interlocutors from other cultural backgrounds.

In this context, this article aims to contribute to the debate on the latent need to develop research that takes into account the dimension of critical intercultural mediation.

CONTEXTS OF INTERCULTURAL MEDIATION

Within the contemporary educational context, Nussbaum (2016) warns us of a "silent crisis" in which nations have "discarded" skills "in the thirst for national profit". As the arts and humanities are everywhere reduced, there is a serious erosion of the qualities that are essential to democracy itself. The author reminds us that great educators and nation-builders understood how the arts and humanities teach children the critical thinking that is necessary for independent action and intelligent resistance to the blind power of tradition and authority.

If this trend continues nations all over the world will soon be producing generations of useful machines, rather than complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person's sufferings and achievements. The future to the world's democracies hangs in the balance. (Nussbaum, 2014:2)

Thus, the humanities and the negotiation of meaning are essential elements of democratic educational praxis and underpin the communicative process of managing intercultural mediation. The process of globalization combined with the use of new information and communication technologies has guided the current cultural clash, as it allows for personal and/or virtual contact between countless people from different *backgrounds*, to an extent that was unimaginable a few decades ago, with the increase in international migratory flows being one of the biggest contributors to this type of contact. Currently, it is estimated that there are 232 million international migrants in the world, more than at any time in human history and this number is expected to increase even more in the future, with demographic changes, economic disparities, environmental changes (Barrett, 2017: x).

In this way, the migrant crisis today is the biggest challenge to European culture and society since the fall of the Berlin Wall - and perhaps since the end of the Second World War. To illustrate this, let's look at a new trend that is emerging among a small number of Muslims recently arrived in Germany - converting to Christianity. Hundreds of refugees from Iran and Afghanistan have been baptized in just one Berlin church. "*Christian communities across Germany (...) have also reported a growing number of Iranians converting to Christianity,*" according to the *Associated Press*.

It so happens that at the time the Council of Europe drafted its human rights laws in the aftermath of the Second World War, no one designed the laws to persuade Muslims to convert. Today, however, religion is deeply integrated into the migration crisis. In this context, we point out that religion is the starting point for understanding this crisis and, at the same time, crucial for understanding Europe's response to it, as well as pointing

out that it could widen the divide between the two cultures. Furthermore, the figures are impressive: of the 330,000 immigrants who arrived in Europe in 2017, around 110,000 are from Syria; more than 200,000 are from majority Muslim countries; another 35,000 are from Nigeria and Eritrea, which are evenly divided between Christians and Muslims.

Faced with this contemporary scenario, in which geographical borders are no longer an obstacle to the construction of global citizenship, this new migratory movement requires an understanding of the new contours of human rights. Article 2 (UN, 1948:5) tells us:

Article II

1 - *Everyone has the capacity to enjoy the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.*

2 - *Nor will any distinction be made based on political status, legal or international country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it is an independent territory or under guardianship, without its own government, or subject to any other limitation of sovereignty.*

As we can see in the first two items of Article II of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, mentioned above, there is a need to legitimize the reconstruction of the meaning of human rights today, since there is an urgent need to rethink the true scope of their universal ownership, as well as the content of the human dignity on which they are based. Despite recognizing the equality and freedom of all human beings in terms of rights and dignity, there is no mention of the ethical foundation or what it means to *have* these rights.

Although the Universal Declaration did not mention anything to this effect, it is a fact that the exercise of these rights depends not

only on their formal recognition, but also on people's *ability* to exercise them. Although it recognized the right indiscriminately to all people, which is why it is universal, it conceived the ownership of these rights incorrectly, as it limits their legality. We note that the intentionally neutral language of human rights, given the way in which these two aspects are treated, needs to be complemented if it is to become effectively emancipatory.

The evolution of international human rights protection must be progressive and in line with the ideal of social justice. With a view to building this new *ethos*, we need to understand what "*having rights*" means and to what extent in order to achieve the full development of human dignity.

In this direction, we find in the capabilities approach proposed by Nussbaum (2014, p:42-43) a fruitful contribution to the need for new directions in education as an opportunity for (trans)formation in the light of the perspective of global citizenship. The author lists ten capacities that are understood as general objectives that can later be specified by the society in question, which will proceed in a way that relates to the fundamental rights it wishes to support. However, to a certain extent, they all form an integral part of a concept of minimum social justice, and therefore any society that does not guarantee them to all its citizens, at any of the minimum thresholds stipulated as adequate, runs the risk of not being considered just, regardless of its level of wealth. Below we present the current version, taking into account issues relating to pluralism: The Core Human Capacities:

1. **Life.** *To be able to live a normal life to the end; not to die prematurely or because one's life is so short that it is not worth living;*
2. **Physical Health.** *Being able to enjoy good health, which includes reproductive health; being able to eat properly; having adequate shelter.*

3. **Physical Integrity:** Being able to move freely from one place to another; having protection against violent assaults, including sexual harassment and domestic violence, having the opportunity to decide in the areas of reproduction and sexual satisfaction.

4. **Senses, Imagination and Thought.** To be able to use the senses - to imagine, think and argue - and to be able to do so in an “authentically human” way, informed and improved by an adequate education that includes (but is not limited to) the ability to read and write, to perceive and interpret what is read, and also scientific and mathematical experimentation. To be able to use imagination and thought, applying both to experiences and productions of one’s own choosing: religious, literary, musical, etc. Being able to apply one’s own thinking in areas safeguarded by the guarantee of freedom of expression, such as political and artistic freedom and religious practice. To be able to enjoy pleasant experiences and avoid pain that is not beneficial.

5. **Emotions.** Being able to make emotional connections with things and people; loving those who love and care for us and suffering in their absence, feeling anxiety, gratitude and legitimate anger. Not to be subject to the deterioration of emotional development due to fear or anxiety. (Supporting this capacity means supporting the forms of association that are decisive for its development).

6. **Practical Reason.** To be able to form a conception of the good and to be able to dedicate oneself to a critical reflection on the planning of one’s life (which requires the protection of freedom of conscience and religious practice).

7. **Association:**

A) To be able to live with and for others and to be able to recognize and express concern for others; to be able to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation in which other human beings find themselves. (Protecting this capacity means supporting institutions that represent and animate such types of associations, as well as defending freedom of assembly and political discussion).

B) Having a supportive social basis for self-esteem and non-humiliation; being treated as a dignified human being whose value is equal to that of others. (This requires an abundance of official documentation that does not discriminate against race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion, origin, etc.)

8. **Other Species.** Being able to care about animals, plants and the natural world, and having a sense of responsibility towards them.

9. **Play.** Being able to laugh, have fun and enjoy recreational activities.

10. **Control over your own environment:**

A) **Political.** Having the effective capacity to participate in the political decisions that regulate one’s life; having the right to political participation and the protection of freedom of expression and association.

B) **Material.** To be able to own property, movable and immovable, and to have property rights on an equal basis with others; to have the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; to have the right to protection against unjustified arrest warrants and seizure of property. To be able to work as a human being who uses practical reason and creates a relationship of mutual knowledge with other workers.

We can deduce from this awareness that some capacities are so vital in the life of any human being that their absence would imply, from an Aristotelian point of view, the absence of human life and that some deprivations would be devastating within any culture, despite the understanding that each culture may have of the world. Nussbaum (2014:21) argues that these basic elements of a cosmopolitan education could lead to a global dialog: “It seems to me that by limiting our knowledge and our thinking to the borders of the nation and refusing to adopt a broader, global perspective, we are undermining the very concept of multicultural respect which, in educational terms, is a fundamental concept.”

It seems to us, therefore, that in order to strengthen democracy, educational systems need to take into account the multicultural character of society and aim to actively contribute to peaceful coexistence and positive interaction between different cultural groups. Traditionally, there are two approaches: multicultural education and intercultural education. Multicultural education uses learning about other cultures to produce acceptance, or at least tolerance, of those cultures. Intercultural education aims to go beyond passive coexistence to a way of living in a developing and sustainable multicultural society by creating understanding, respect and dialog between different cultural groups. Interculturality is thus a dynamic concept and refers to the evolution of relations between cultural groups. It has been defined as “the existence and equal interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect”. Interculturality presupposes multiculturalism and the results of “intercultural” exchange and dialogue in local, regional and national communities or at international level (Unesco, 2006).

Intercultural dialogue is therefore of significant importance in framing these intriguing questions within the instructional context of language teaching, for which we have, since the 1990s, had critical theorists who argue that, in order to understand language use, we must take into account the power relations in the practices and interactions in which learners aim to participate, while others turn to critical theories applied to literature, questioning the construction of one’s individual identity and how learning a foreign language can affirm or even transform an individual’s identity.

Intercultural inquiries into foreign language acquisition reveal themselves to be a hybrid, heterogeneous and multidisciplinary

area. That said, the critical intercultural communicative approach is a new area of research within foreign language teaching/learning studies. According to Larsen-Freeman (2008), recent theoretical changes that have evolved from a conception of language as a structuralist-based mental system to language as a functional tool for communicative purposes have shown a greater impact on foreign language teaching. Nevertheless, the notion of “*plurilingualism*” has accompanied this change in contemporary times; today, languages are not considered hermetically sealed and distinct intact systems within the minds of language users; they are assumed to develop from experience, which makes knowledge of language dynamic, situated and often partial and shaped over time by use.

For its part, many researchers have neglected intercultural competence in the acquisition of a foreign language, since the main concern in the context of language instruction was only the mastery of grammatical competence. The main reason for the detachment from the cultural dimension is that language teaching was heavily influenced by theories of discourse analysis and speech acts, in which the linguistic aspect predominated.

It is worth mentioning that Byram (1997:73) has had a fundamental impact on the new educational guidelines regarding the role of the intercultural mediator (*intercultural speaker*), by presenting a model of Intercultural Communicative Competence with the (*savoirs*) knowledge that makes up an “*intercultural speaker*”. This model incorporates: a) (*Savoirs*) Knowledge about social groups and their cultures and interactions about individual and social interaction processes; b) (*Savoir comprendre*) Skills for interpreting and relating aspects of the two cultures; c) (*Savoir apprendre/faire*) Learning skills: discovery and/or interaction; d) (*Savoir être*) Attitudes: how to relativize one’s own values and be re-

ceptive to the values of others. The author integrates all these aspects into an educational policy (*savoir s'engager*): committed to developing the learner's critical cultural awareness.

This approach debunks the myth of the ideal native speaker. The learner's culture is valued in the learning process, since the "*intercultural speaker*" is perceived as using part of his cultural identity to understand the culture of the Other and also uses knowledge about other cultures to re-signify his own, since when speaking another language he does not transport himself from one culture to another, acquiring a new identity in a "schizophrenic" way. Byram (1997: 71) states that: "*The model does not therefore depend on a concept of neutral communication of information across cultural barriers, but rather on a rich definition of communication as interaction, and on a philosophy of critical engagement with otherness and critical reflection on self*".

From another theoretical perspective, we note that in the Common European Framework of References for Languages (hereafter CEFR, 2001), a Council of Europe document that guides language teaching/learning policies, the "*intercultural speaker*" model proposed by Byram and Zarate (1994) and Byram (1997), although mentioned in the references, has been deconfigured, and there is no mention of "*savoir s'engager*", which is the primary dimension in intercultural citizenship education. The document states that, in mediation activities, "*the language user is not prepared to express his or her own thoughts, but to act as an intermediary between interlocutors who are unable to understand each other directly. They are usually (but not exclusively) speakers of different languages*". (CEFR, 2001:129). In addition, the document's incompleteness also permeates a list limited to activities focused on oral mediation (interpreting) and another on written mediation activities (translating).

On the other hand, the Council of Europe recently published a complementary document to the CEFR (2001), entitled: "*Common European Framework of Reference For Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment; Companion Volume with New Descriptors*" (hereinafter CEFR, 2017), aimed at filling in the gaps in the previous document. This document advocates *broadening language education in a number of ways, not least by this vision of the user/learner as a social agent coconstructing meaning in interaction, an by the notions of mediation and plurilingual/pluricultural competences*". (CEFR 2017:23).

The document claims to adopt an approach to mediation that aims to broaden the *illustrative descriptors* of the CEFR (2001) and is therefore broader than just conceptualizing interlingual mediation. In addition to interlingual mediation, it also aims to encompass mediation related to communication and learning, as well as social and cultural mediation. The justification was that this broader approach was taken because of the relevance, in diverse classrooms, of the spread of CLIL (*Content and Language Integrated Learning*) and because mediation is increasingly seen as part of learning, but especially of all language learning.

Furthermore, the document states that *mediation descriptors* are particularly relevant for the classroom in connection with small group, collaborative tasks: "*The mediation descriptors are particularly relevant for the classroom in connection with small group, collaborative tasks*". (CEFR, 2017:34). In particular, with regard to interlingual mediation, users should remember that this involves social and cultural competence, as well as plurilingual competence. Note that the activities are presented in scales for mediation, divided into three groups, reflecting the way mediation tends to occur (cf. CEFR, 2017:102; my translation):

A) *Text mediation:*

- *Transferring specific information - oral or written;*
- *Explanation of data (e.g. graphs, diagrams, tables, etc.) - oral or written;*
- *Text processing - oral or written;*
- *Translating a written text - oral or written;*
- *Taking notes (lectures, seminars, meetings, etc.);*
- *Expressing a personal issue in response to creative texts (including literature)*
- *Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature).*

B) *Concept Mediation:*

- *Collaborate in a group;*
- *Facilitate collaborative interaction with peers;*
- *Collaborate in the construction of meaning;*
- *Leading group work;*
- *Manage interaction;*
- *Encourage conceptual conversation.*

C) *Communication Mediation:*

- *Facilitating multicultural space;*
- *Acting as an intermediary in informal situations (with friends and colleagues);*
- *Facilitate communication in delicate situations and disagreements.*

When we analyze the above-mentioned mediation scales, we see that the biggest innovation in this new complementary document (CEFR, 2017), compared to the previous document (CEFR, 2001), is the incorporation of two new aspects: *concept mediation and communication mediation*. With regard to the first item, entitled *mediation of texts*, the same oral and written mediation activities are observed, limited only to some types of interpretation and translation tasks; however, critical analysis of creative texts (including literature) is included as an option. The next item, *concept mediation*, refers to the process of facilitating access to knowledge and concepts for others, especially if they cannot

access them directly on their own. This is a fundamental aspect of parenting, guidance, teaching and training: “*Mediating concepts refers to the process of facilitating access to knowledge and concepts for others, particularly if they may be unable to access this directly on their own. This is a fundamental aspect of parenting, mentoring, teaching and training.*” (CEFR, 2017:102)

With regard to the descriptors for *mediating communication*, the document justifies their direct relevance for teachers, trainers, students and professionals who wish to develop their awareness and competence in this area in order to obtain better results in their communicative encounters in a given language or languages, especially when there is an intercultural element involved:

The descriptors for mediating communication therefore have direct relevance to teachers, trainers, students and professionals who wish to develop their awareness and competence in this area, in order to achieve better outcomes in their communicative encounters in a particular language or languages, particularly when there is an intercultural element involved. (CEFR, 2017:120)

After analyzing this brief foray into the supplementary document (CEFR, 2017), we can see that the main scope advocated, a broad approach to the “illustrative descriptors” of cultural and social mediation, is not fully realized, leaving aside some aspects underlying cultural issues (*inter alia*, the arts), but especially ignoring emerging social issues. Thus, the concept of linguistic mediation develops descriptors only related to the context of linguistic learning, as well as disregarding activities linked to cultural contexts and/or related to processes arising from social phenomena, for example, transnational mobility. In this way, mediation continues to be treated only as a component of communicative competence, disregarding it as

an intercultural communicative competence, directing activity scales to needs merely related to the instructional context, although the document calls for plurilingual/pluricultural components. We share Sequeira's (2012:310) conclusion that: "*although the CEFR (2001) aims to reconcile a teaching goal relating to personal and social development - close to the libertarian awareness presupposed in Kant's concept of Bildung - with another relating to the training of specific skills, it ultimately oscillates uncomfortably between the two, revealing the tension between culture and society.*"

This being the case, new concepts have emerged to deal with this multicultural challenge, as we can see in the work of Zarate (2003), in which the language learner is defined as someone *between two* "*entre deux*", emblematic of the conditions of many people in post-modern times, whose identities and identifications are much less simple than those promoted by identification with nation-states. Nonetheless, cultures are unstable and, even when powerful, they cannot dominate the practices of minority communities, since they themselves could lose their identity by infiltrating cultures and becoming involved in conflicts. We agree that the conception of language underlying the intercultural communicative process should be thought of as discourse, "*a system for constructing meaning, developed culturally and acquired socially in relations of confrontation and power.*" (Jordão, 2007:22)

We therefore stress that respect for pluralism denotes values in itself, and requires that certain cross-cultural principles be recognized as fundamental rights. "*Genuine respect for pluralism requires unwavering protection of religious freedom, freedom of association and freedom of expression.*" (Nussbaum, 2014:55). If we assume the role of intercultural mediators, taking a positive stance on issues related to pluralism, but do

not commit to the non-negotiability of these items as fundamental to building a just order, we are in fact demonstrating that we do not support it in its entirety.

From this perspective, we advocate the need to adopt a critical intercultural stance when developing social practices related to the intercultural mediation approach, particularly, but not exclusively, in the contemporary context of human mobility. In this way, we ratify Walsh's ideas (2012:9) that the approach and practice that emerges from critical interculturality is not functional to the current model of society, but seriously questions it. While functional interculturality takes cultural diversity as the central axis, sustaining its recognition and inclusion within society and nation states (non-national by practice and conception) and leaving aside institutional-structural mechanisms and patterns of power, there are those that maintain inequality. Critical interculturalism is based on the problem of power, its pattern of racialization and the difference (colonial, not simply cultural) constructed as a function of it. Functional interculturalism responds to and is part of the interests and needs of social institutions. Critical interculturalism, on the other hand, is a construction of people who have suffered a history of subjection and subalternization.

In this sense, given the complexity of these contemporary social issues in teachers' professional practice, critical intercultural mediation has emerged as an effective and significant alternative for strengthening emerging paradigms that counter violence and point towards strengthening global citizenship. Thus, the interculturalist perspective has allowed us to give due prominence in the curriculum to the mediator's training (their units of competence) in subjects such as: "*a dynamic and changing conception of culture, the identification of the role of prejudices*

and stereotypes in the interpersonal and social relationship that is mediated, the particularities of intercultural communication and interethnic conflict, the interrelationships between the person, their situation and cultural background, convergent and common areas between those involved, etc.” (Gimenez, 2010:24). Next, (2014) the author presents us with the distinctions between resolutive mediation and preventive and transformative mediation, defending the following functions of the intercultural mediator: facilitate communication between people/groups from different cultures; advise social agents in their relationship with minority collectives on issues of interculturality, cultural diversity (diverse cultures, immigration) and intercommunity relations; advise people and communities in their relationship with hegemonic society and culture; promote access to public and private services and resources; build citizenship and actively accompany personal processes of integration and inclusion and favor social and community participation.

Let's bear in mind that the rapid spread of economic and technological globalization, as well as the need for greater concern with guaranteeing human rights on the international stage since the beginning of the 21st century, require urgent transformations in foreign language teacher training courses, so that teachers can reflect on the importance of their role in intercultural mediation, as well as explore possibilities for action, build provisional solutions collectively, *“perceive themselves in their subjection and, at the same time, be able to exercise their agency informally”* (Jordão, 2006, 32). Thus, one way to develop intercultural mediation would be to set up multicultural (ethnic, religious, gender, etc.) mediated study groups in the university environment, leaving open a space in which teachers, students and the community would feel comfortable engaging in discussions,

based on a dialogical and political ethic, aimed at building public policies, together with institutions and public bodies, in order to legitimize fundamental human rights and social equality (Sequeira; Boni, 2019).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

From this perspective, postmodern studies of science, in line with the need for intercultural mediation, production and distribution of knowledge, call for an essentially critical stance, inquiring about the impact of social, economic and political forces on the theory and practice of language teaching and learning (Fairclough, 1989; Pennycook, 1995), as well as *“for a questioning rather than uncritical pedagogy aimed at international citizenship”* (Sequeira, 2016, p.67). We therefore reaffirm that academic debate should be encouraged, where conflicts are seen as opportunities for transcultural transformation through respect for pluralism and are socially mediated through intercultural dialogue, seeking the relationship between subjectivities among themselves and with the world, as well as through awareness of their civil, political, social and cultural rights, that is, between citizens as active social agents and the future prospect of a more just, peaceful and supportive coexistence.

In addition, we maintain that the legitimization of an education for global citizenship implies that language teachers assume a *“transformative praxis”* (Freire, 1976), inherently critical, in order to try to operationalize intercultural mediation actions inside and outside the school context, which are closely related to intercultural communicative competence and the ability of learners to become citizens of cultural mediation at local, national and global levels (Sequeira; Boni, 2019).

As Caride (2016:19) summarizes:

In short, we are referring to a whole set of values, attitudes, behaviours and lifestyles that reject violence and prevent conflicts, making use of dialogue and negotiation between individuals, groups, social organizations and even states. A culture of peace, which mediation can and should foster, by trying to empower people and social groups to make choices, acting not only according to the circumstances of the present, but also according to the vision of the future to which they aspire.

In concluding this article, we share Freire's thinking, not believing that the women and men of the world, regardless of their political choices, but knowing and assuming themselves to be women and men, as people, will not deepen what already exists today as a kind of malaise that is becoming widespread

in the face of neoliberal evil. A malaise that will end up consolidating itself in a new rebellion in which the critical word, humanist discourse, a commitment to solidarity, the vehement denunciation of the negation of men and women and the announcement of a "genteficado" world will be weapons of incalculable reach (Freire, 2002:48).

We end our intercultural "encounter" here, in the certainty of a next one, with a passage from "The Appointed Meeting": "*Three things remained from everything: the certainty that it was always beginning, the certainty that it had to continue and the certainty that it would be interrupted before it ended. To turn the interruption into a new path. Turning the fall into a dance step, fear into a ladder, sleep into a bridge, the search into an encounter*" (Sabino, 1981:154).

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